



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **GOVERNMENT DROPS CASE AGAINST VETERAN DeJONG**

*Bishop, Eddington Praise Move to Allow Vet,  
Three Children Stay in United States*

**Mineola, NY-** Congressman Tim Bishop and Suffolk County Legislator Jack Eddington announced that the government has dropped its case against David DeJong. This will mean that DeJong will be granted permanent resident status and will be able to apply for citizenship. The event was held at the law offices of attorney Donald Birnbaum, who took the case on for free.

“This has been a long story, but it has a happy ending,” Bishop said. “David DeJong has served this country honorably as a U.S. soldier, and I know he will serve it honorably as a U.S. citizen. I thank Legislator Eddington for his advocacy in this case as well as Donald Birnbaum for taking this case pro bono.”

“Mr. DeJong has done everything we ask of immigrants; he came to America legally, served in our military and pays taxes,” said Legislator Eddington. “He and his family are shining examples of how, with the help of his elected officials, our immigration policy can work. I would like to extend an extra thanks to Congressman Bishop for all of his work to help Mr. DeJong through this arduous process, and Donald Birnbaum for taking on this case.”

DeJong was born in Canada and raised in Farmingville, where he lives with his mother, sister, and stepfather. Growing up in Farmingville, he had permanent resident status. He graduated from Sachem High School before enlisting in the United States Army. DeJong served for five years in the U.S. Army, and after being discharged, he married a German citizen and worked on an Army base in Hungary assisting troops preparing to invade Iraq.

He was unaware that his residency status had lapsed while living overseas but working on an Army base. One of the reasons he had stayed in Germany is that his oldest son Markus, 6, was born with a heart defect and required intensive medical care. He also has two other children, 5-year-old twins Lukas and Sean. Markus still needs heart surgery, which he will receive in the next few weeks.

The children were staying with his parents in Farmingville in September, 2005, when the problems began. DeJong visited Canada to obtain Canadian passports for his children who are dual citizens of both Canada and Germany. When he attempted to re-enter the United States, he was stopped at the border and forced to sign papers acknowledging that he had forfeited his

residency status. Under duress because he wanted to see his children, he signed the papers, and since that time, immigration authorities have been attempting to deport him.

DeJong's case has drawn tremendous community support. Thousands of petitions were delivered to Congressman Bishop asking him to support DeJong. Legislator Eddington, a fellow veteran, also took up the case.

"If you show a little patriotism for this country it will get back to you," DeJong said. "It did for me."

"It was absurd that David DeJong was being so vigorously pursued by immigration officials. Meanwhile, millions of people who are here without proper documentation don't get anywhere near the same level of scrutiny," Bishop said.

DeJong is currently taking teaching classes at Suffolk County Community College. Now that this matter is cleared up, the family can devote more attention to Markus' medical needs, and David can apply for US citizenship and his sons can become citizens as well.

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